

REMARKS

Claims 1-8 and 12 are currently pending in the application. By this paper, independent claims 1 and 12 have been amended to indicate that the filter is retractable into the housing for repair or replacement. Support for this amendment can be found throughout the specification. See for example, page 14, lines 6-15.

The present invention is directed to a filter system for use in a reactor in which a housing is attached to the reactor. The filter is retractable into the housing when it is necessary to remove the filter from the reactor for repair or replacement. The current amendments to independent claims 1 and 12 more clearly define this aspect of the invention.

In the Office Action, claims 1, 2, 4, 6, 7, and 12 were rejected under 35 USC 102(b) as being anticipated by Garbo (2,526,651). Applicants respectfully disagree. Referring to Figs. 1 and 2 of Garbo, it appears that filter 6 is either too wide at the top and/or too long to be fully retracted into housing 11. Accordingly, Applicants do not believe that the claims as previously presented were anticipated by Garbo. Nevertheless, as currently amended, the claims are further distinguishable from the Garbo reference inasmuch as there is not any teaching or suggestion as to how the filters of Garbo could be retracted into the housing for repair or replacement.

In the Office Action, claims 1-8 and 12 were rejected under 35 USC 102(b) as being anticipated by Shukunobe et al. (4,965,051). Applicants respectfully submit that Shukunobe neither teaches nor suggests the invention as set forth in amended claims 1 and 12. As set forth in column 7, line 27 through column 8, line 9 of Shukunobe, inner tube 38 in conjunction with net or screen 40 is raised to the upper position when it is desired to wash the biocatalysts contained in the reactor. After washing of the biocatalysts, it is lowered to its normal operating position. It is not retracted in order to repair or replace the filter.

In the Office Action, claim 3 was rejected under 35 USC 103(a) as being unpatentable over Garbo. For the reasons set forth above, Applicants submit that claim 3 would not have been obvious over the Garbo reference.

In view of the foregoing, Applicants submit that all of the claims are in condition for allowance and favorable consideration by the Examiner is requested. Should the Examiner find

any impediment to the prompt allowance of the claims that could be corrected by telephone interview with the undersigned, the Examiner is requested to initiate such an interview.

Respectfully submitted,

ANNE BOER and
FRANCISCUS J. M. SCHRAUWEN

P.O. Box 2463
Houston, Texas 77252-2463

By /Craig M. Lundell/
Attorney, Craig M. Lundell
Registration No. 30,284
(713) 241-2475